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EXAMINER	
WU, RUTAO	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
3639	

DATE MAILED: 01/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/081,270	STUTZ, PETER	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Rutao Wu	3639	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *21 February 2002*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *03/25/02 04/12/02*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-11, 24-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat No. 6,029,155 to Bass et al.

Referring to claims 1 and 27:

A system for franking machine communication, comprising:

A franking machine; (see 6,029,155, col 5: lines 47-55)

At least one peripheral device; and (col 2: lines 33-37, 49-51)

A bus system comprising

A network controller adapted to be electronically coupled to each peripheral device and the franking machine, and adapted to permit data communications between each peripheral device and the franking machine, and between each peripheral device; (col 5: lines 63-67; col 6: lines 1-17, 18-29; col 7: lines 8-15)

A host device associated with the network controller of the franking machine, the host device adapted to detect and identify each peripheral device and

configure the franking machine based on a state of each peripheral device; and (col 3: lines 20-25; col 5: lines 47-55)

A bus adapted to be electronically connected to each network controller for transferring data signals between the franking machine and each peripheral device, and between each peripheral device. (col 6: lines 18-30)

Referring to claim 2:

The system of claim 1, wherein the bus system further comprises a two wire terminated bus. (col 3: lines 10-17)

Referring to claim 3:

The system of claim 1, wherein the peripheral devices have broadcast data transmission capability. (col 6: lines 18-29)

Referring to claim 4:

The system of claim 1, further including a communications system included on the network controller of each of the peripheral devices and the franking machine, wherein the communications system associated with the franking machine includes the host device. (col 6: lines 18-29)

Referring to claim 5:

The system of claim 1, wherein the peripheral devices include letter handling peripheral device. (col 2: lines 43-46; col 5: lines 65-67)

Referring to claim 6:

The system of claim 1, wherein the data signals transmitted by each of the peripheral devices include sensor data signals indicating an operating state of each of the peripheral devices. (col 2: lines 61-63; col 8: lines 6-10)

Referring to claim 7:

The system of claim 1, wherein the peripheral devices are a feeder, a front guide or a stacker. (col 2: lines 43-46; col 5: lines 65-67)

Referring to claim 8:

The system of claim 1, wherein the peripheral devices are a static weighting scale, a stand for a static scale, an addressing module, or a dynamic scale. (col 2: lines 43-46; col 5: lines 65-67)

Referring to claim 9:

The system of claim 1, wherein the bus system is adapted to be expandable, modular and open for addition or removal of peripheral devices. (col 2: lines 43-46; col 5: lines 65-67)

Referring to claim 10:

The system of claim 1, wherein the peripheral devices are connected directly to the bus system for minimizing a footprint of the franking machine and the associated peripheral devices. (col 7: lines 24-55)

Referring to claim 11:

The system of claim 1 wherein the bus is a wireless bus for wireless communication between the franking machine and each peripheral device, and between each peripheral device. (col 3: lines 16-19)

Referring to claim 24:

A system for communication between a plurality of peripheral devices, comprising:

At least one peripheral device; (col 2: lines 33-37, 49-51)

A bus system adapted to be connected to each peripheral device and allow data signals to be transmitted between each of the peripheral devices, comprising

A network controller for each of the peripheral devices, each network controller integrated with one of the peripheral devices for transmitting and receiving data signals; and (col 7: lines 8-16)

Wherein the network controller associated with at least one of the peripheral devices transmits data signals to each of the other peripheral devices connected to the bus system, and the network controller is adapted to determine a state of each of the peripheral devices and a configuration of the peripheral devices. (col 8: lines 54-57)

Referring to claim 25:

The system of claim 24, further including a communications system associated with each network controller, wherein the communications system for at least one of the peripheral devices is adapted to automatically detect and identify the peripheral devices connected to the bus system by requesting and receiving an identification data signal transmitted by each of the peripheral devices. (col 2: lines 61-63; col 8: lines 6-10)

Referring to claim 26:

The system of claim 24, wherein the bus system provides a standard configuration for connecting the peripheral devices to the bus system. (col 7: lines 8-20)

Referring to claim 28:

The system of claim 27, wherein the host device determines an occurrence of an error condition if the peripheral device is detached from the franking machine configuration. (col 7: lines 30-33)

Referring to claim 29:

The system of claim 27, further including a communications system included on the network controller of each of the peripheral devices and the franking machine, wherein the communications system associated with the franking machine includes the host device. (col 5: lines 47-55; col 7: lines 8-16)

Referring to claim 30:

The system of claim 27, wherein the bus system allows the connection of the additional peripheral devices without hardware changes to the franking machine. (col 3: lines 2-9)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 12-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bass et al.

As per claims 12 and 22:

Bass et al does not explicitly disclose the following:

The system of claim 1, wherein the network controller permits data signal communications directly between each the peripheral device without processing of the data signals by the host device.

Bass et al does disclose that the peripheral devices are connected using serial and parallel ports, with the reason being that a serial interface is standard and easy to set up for many computer systems. The examiner submits that serial and parallel ports are a standard and well know in the arts, and it is also well know in the arts that devices connected by serial or parallel ports can communicate or transfer data on the serial buses with each other without the need for a host or central device directing. Further evidence is provided by Bass et al by noting that the peripheral management device, not the host computer, manages communications with the peripheral devices. (col 6: lines 25-30)

As per claim 13:

A method for communication with peripheral devices of a franking machine, comprising the steps of:

Providing a bus system intenerated with the franking machine adapted to allow the franking machine to communicate with each of the peripheral devices by sending and receiving data signals via the bus system, wherein each of the peripheral devices and the franking machine include a network controller for communicating via the bus system; (col 7: lines 24-35)

Coordinating an operation of the peripheral devices by connecting a host device associated with the network controller of the franking machine to the bus system for:

Automatically detecting the peripheral devices connected to the franking system for determining a configuration of the franking system; (col 3: lines 2-8)

Determining an operating state for each of the peripheral devices by transmitting a first data signal to the peripheral devices, and receiving and analyzing a second data signal from each of the peripheral devices; and (col 2: lines 61-63; col 8: lines 6-10)

Bass et al does not explicitly disclose permitting data signal communication directly between each of the peripheral devices.

Bass et al does disclose that the peripheral devices are connected using serial and parallel ports. However, the examiner submits that serial and parallel ports are a standard and well know in the arts, and it is also well know in the arts that devices connected by serial or parallel ports can communicate or transfer data on the serial buses with each other without the need for a host or central device directing. Further evidence is provided by Bass et al by noting that the peripheral management device, not the host computer, manages communications with the peripheral devices. (col 6: lines 25-30)

Bass et al discloses the following:

As per claim 14:

The method of claim 13, wherein the step of coordinating the operation of the peripheral devices further includes the host device broadcasting the command data signal to all of the peripheral devices. (col 6: lines 18-30)

As per claim 15:

The method of claim 13, wherein in the step of automatically detecting the peripheral devices coupled to the franking system, the step includes automatically receiving an identification data signal from each of the peripheral devices connected to the bus system. (col 6: lines 25-30)

As per claim 16:

The method of claim 15, wherein in the step of automatically detecting the peripheral devices connected to the franking system, the step further includes distinguishing between each identification data signal from each of the peripheral devices even if two or more of the peripheral devices have the same identification data signal, for determining which of the peripheral devices output a data signal to the bus system. (col 6: lines 25-30; col 8: lines 2-4)

As per claim 17:

The method of claim 16, wherein the step of automatically detecting the peripheral devices connected to the franking system further includes the step of each peripheral device transmitting a unique serial number signal for uniquely identifying each peripheral device. (col 6: lines 25-30, lines 42-45; col 8: lines 2-4)

As per claim 18:

The method of claim 13, further including the steps of:

Automatically detecting a disconnection of each of the peripheral devices from the bus system; and (col 8: lines 30-33)

Bass et al does not explicitly disclose reconfiguring the franking system based on the peripheral devices in communication with the franking system. However, it is an inherent feature of the invention has the ability to reconfigure the system if a peripheral device were removed since it has the ability to configure the system when a new peripheral device is introduced.

As per claim 19:

The method of claim 13, further including steps of receiving a status data signal from each of the peripheral devices for indicating a change in the operation of the peripheral devices, wherein the transmitting and receiving of the status data signals can be processed without requiring use of a main processor of the franking machine. (col 8: lines 54-57)

As per claim 20:

The method of claim 13, further including the step of establishing a test state for each of the peripheral devices which permits access to sensors and actors of each of the peripheral devices for testing of each peripheral devices. (col 8: lines 5-10, 54-56)

As per claim 21:

The method of claim 13, wherein the step of providing the bus system integrated with the franking machine, the peripheral devices are letter handling devices. (col 2: lines 43-46; col 5: lines 65-67)

As per claim 23:

The method of claim 13, wherein the step of coordinating an operation of the peripheral devices by connecting a host device associated with the network controller of

the franking machine to the bus system further includes the step of associating a communications system on the network controller of each of the peripheral devices and the franking machine, wherein the communications system associated with the franking machine includes the host device. (col 5: lines 47-55; col 7: lines 8-16)

Conclusion

5. Examiner's Note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that the applicant, in preparing the responses, fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

U.S. Pat No. 4,308,579 to Dlugos.

U.S. Pat No. 4,410,961 to Dlugos et al.

U.S. Pat No. 6,378,012 to Bass et al.

U.S. Pat No. 6,076,081 to Bass et al.

U.S. Pat No. 4,301,507 to Soderberg et al.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rutao Wu whose telephone number is (571)272-3136. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571)272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

rw

JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER